

## 3. Background to the report

- 3.1 Under the Communications Act 2003 ('the Act') Ofcom is required to submit a report to the Secretary of State every three years, describing the state of the electronic communications networks and services in the UK.<sup>20</sup>
- 3.2 We published the first report in 2011 and recognised, at that time, that some aspects of the communications infrastructure were developing rapidly and/or were of particular interest to Government and industry stakeholders. We therefore committed to providing updates on an annual basis, focusing on the areas of greatest change, such as coverage and capacity of fixed and mobile networks.
- 3.3 For fixed broadband services, this report considers services provided to residential consumers and to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We use data gathered from the largest operators in each sector, as well as information already held by Ofcom. Where possible we have re-used data already provided to Ofcom, in order to minimise the burden on stakeholders. We have also gathered data from a number of smaller network providers, including some providers of fibre to the premises (FTTP) and fixed wireless access (FWA) networks.
- 3.4 We present a detailed description of our data sources and methodologies in Annex 1.

### Improving the information available to stakeholders

- 3.5 Alongside this detailed technical report and its concise summary, we are updating the tools launched last year to help consumers and other stakeholders find out more about fixed and mobile services in the UK:
- a) **App for mobile phones and tablet PCs**, which enables consumers to find out more about the fixed broadband and mobile services that are available at their address and test the speed of their fixed and mobile connections. A web-based tool is also available for use on desktop and laptop computers.
  - b) **Online visualisation tool**, which presents the key highlights from this year's report in an intuitive and graphical way. The tool allows the user to view some of the data and narrative from the reports in a more interactive format.
- 3.6 We are publishing a short summary aimed at consumers to highlight the key themes and messages that have emerged in this year's Connected Nations report. Alongside this we are also publishing reports focusing on developments in each of the nations.
- 3.7 As in previous years, we will also be making data available to download via our website. We recognise the value in making this data available to third parties for their own analysis

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/24/section/1>

ss. 134A and 134B of the Act. The Digital Economy Act 2017 added a new s.134AA on additional reports. Additional reports may be published in such manner as Ofcom consider appropriate (s.134AA(2) of the Act).

and we continue to work as part of our broader open data initiative to explore ways in which to further improve this.

## Outline of this report

3.8 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 4: Fixed broadband networks and services
- Section 5: Mobile voice and data services
- Section 6: The Internet of Things
- Section 7: Internet Access Services
- Section 8: Security and resilience
- Section 9: The continuing evolution of television

3.9 We welcome comments from consumers and stakeholders on the report. Please contact us at [connectednationsreport@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:connectednationsreport@ofcom.org.uk).